CMSC 351: Algorithms
Spring 20

Instructor:
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Course Overview: This course presents an introduction to the techniques for designing efficient computer algorithms and analyzing their running times. General topics include asymptotics, solving summations and recurrences, algorithm design techniques, analysis of data structures, and introduction to NP-completeness.


Prerequisites: Each student is expected to know the basic concepts of programming (e.g. loops, pointers, recursion), discrete mathematics (proof by induction, sets), simple data structures (lists, stacks, queues, trees), and calculus (logarithms, differentiation, integration).

Course Work and Exams: Course work will consist of written homework assignments, a programming assignment, two midterm exams, and a final. You may discuss homework problems and general solution strategies with classmates, but you must write up the solutions yourself.

The midterm exams will be:
Wednesday, March 11 from 6:00pm–8:00pm
Tuesday, April 21 from 6:00pm–8:00pm

The final exam will be:
Saturday, May 16 from 4:00–6:00pm

If any of these exam dates are a problem for you, get in touch with Jamie Matthews.

Piazza: We will be using Piazza (www.piazza.com), a question-and-answer system designed to streamline discussion outside of the classroom. It supports LaTeX, code formatting, embedding of images, and attaching of files. It will be moderated by the instructors and TAs, but students are encouraged to answer questions.

Gradescope: We will be using Gradescope to hand in assignments, and to see grades. For those who haven’t used it before, Gradescope is an online submission system for class assignments and tests and for grading them quickly. In this class, we will add you to the Gradescope roster for CMSC 351 automatically. You will upload your submissions for your assignments, and they will be graded by us via a template. Please note that each submission to Gradescope MUST contain the entire assignment, not just part of it. You may submit assignments as scans of your written work or as PDFs of typed documents. Also note that Gradescope contains a “regrade request" that allows you to directly tell us if there is an issue with how we graded a problem, and we will regrade it if necessary. Please use this feature only when you are sure there has been a mistake, or are completely unclear on why you lost points from our feedback.
**ELMS:** We will be using ELMS to get homework solutions, see recorded lectures, and get final grades.

**Grading:** Final grades will be based on the written assignments, (likely) one programming assignment, two midterm exams, and a final exam. The weights of these will be approximately 1% for each regular homework, 3% for the NP-completeness homework, 25% for each midterm, and the remaining percentage (about 35%) for the final exam.

**Disability Support Services:** Any student eligible for and requesting reasonable academic accommodations due to a disability is requested to provide, to the instructor in office hours, a letter of accommodation from the Office of Disability Support Services (DSS) within the first two weeks of the semester.

**Course Evaluations:** The Department of Computer Science takes the student course evaluations very seriously. Evaluations will usually be open during the last few weeks of the course. Students can go to www.courseevalum.umd.edu to complete their evaluations.

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**Syllabus:** This is the current version of the syllabus. The instructor reserves the right to change it at any time.

**Topics:** The following is a *tentative* list of topics and readings in *approximate* order.

1. Introduction, Ch. 1,2
2. Quadratic Sorting Algorithms, Ch. 2
3. Summations, Appendix A
4. Merge Sort, Ch. 2
5. Recurrences (Integer Multiplication) Ch. 4
6. Heapsort, Ch. 6
7. Quicksort, Ch. 7
8. Sorting in Linear Time, Ch. 8
9. Medians and Order Statistics, Ch. 9
10. Graphs and Trees, Appendix B
11. Minimum Spanning Trees, Ch. 23
12. Dijkstra's algorithm, Ch. 24.3
13. Brief introduction to NP-completeness, Ch. 34